

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



REPLY TO TRIBUTE

A radio talk by I. W. Hill, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, delivered through WRC and 42 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, June 18, 1931.

---oo---

Words are inadequate to express my appreciation of your kind message. Truthfully I can say I have always tried to do my duty to the boys and girls of my country, and your kind words are an indication that I have not entirely failed.

My radio audience I plead guilty to the charge of being a pioneer in 4-H Club Work. Nineteen years ago on yesterday I began work in the Department of Agriculture. Only two men had served in the Washington Office before me, O. B. Martin of South Carolina, and O. H. Benson of Iowa. Mr. Martin came to the office in 1909 and Mr. Benson came as assistant to Mr. Martin in 1911; both of these men were appointed by Dr. Seaman A. Knapp. In 1912, Mr. Benson was transferred to the work in the Northern and Western States and I succeeded him.

In the beginning, Mr. Martin went from State to State in the South employing State agents, who were called, school agents, and urging the enrollment of boys to grow an acre of corn. Among the agents employed were L. N. Duncan, now Extension Director in Alabama; I. O. Schaub, now Extension Director in North Carolina. Both of these men were appointed in 1909. J. Phil Campbell, now Director in Georgia, was appointed in 1908 to a position in the Washington Office but later returned to Georgia as State Club Agent.

The Girls' Work was begun in South Carolina in 1910 in Aiken County. Miss Cromer was the first agent appointed. Miss Agnew of Virginia was appointed a short time afterward. Several ladies appointed in 1911 are still in the work. Among them may be named Mrs. Dora Dee Walker of South Carolina, better known as "Mother Walker"; Miss Mary Creswell, Georgia; Miss Hallie Hughes, Virginia and Mrs. Jane S. McKimmon, North Carolina.

In 1911, Mr. Martin and Mr. Benson worked out the emblem, a four-leaf clover with an H on each leaf. Miss Carrie Harrison of Iowa suggested the motto, "To Make The Best Better." The official title of Boys' Work was Boys' Agricultural Clubs. They were better known, however, as Boys' Corn Clubs. It was during this period that big yields of corn were urged and at least 20 boys made more than 200 bushels on their acres. The clubs were county wide.

The official title of the Girls' Work was Canning and Poultry Clubs but they were better known as "Tomato Clubs." They grew 1/10 acre of tomatoes and put up as many cans as possible. I remember a girl in Alabama who put up and exhibited at State Fair, 1800 cans. No club label was used at first. The first label was a large tomato with a cut tomato by its side and under them the motto "To Make The Best Better." In 1913 Mrs. McKimmon of North Carolina, urged that a distinctive label be adopted and the entire force in the office began to work on it. Mr. Martin and myself during this time attended the conference for Education in the South held at Richmond, Virginia. Your

speaker was intently listening to a speaker on the platform, when Mr. Martin slapped his leg, turned to me and said, "I've got it." "Get what?" said I. He took an envelope from his pocket, write 4-H on it and I said "I agree." That was the beginning of the name 4-H Clubs.

The Farmers' Cooperative Demonstration Work began with men. Here and there boys were taken as "demonstrators" by agents. Quite a number of these agents took a keen interest in boys. But as said above the clubs were county wide. On the other hand, the work in Home Economics began with girls. The girls were brought together in groups and taught to can. The vast majority of the agents were employed for only a short time during the canning season. They were paid by funds from the General Education Board, receiving only one dollar per annum from the Government.

During my term of office in Club Work, I have steadfastly insisted that every club member must conserve, preserve and produce something of economic value. We have further urged that all club members be brought together in community groups in order to teach boys and girls to work together, to play together, to sing together, to make mass attack on the social and spiritual side of community life.

Through the liberality of Congress and the States, great changes have been wrought during the past twenty years, with county and home demonstration agents taking the scientific facts worked out on the experiment stations and in the laboratories of the Government and the States, to the men, women, boys and girls on the farm; we have a new country in the making and generations, yet unborn, will learn to venerate the name of Seaman A. Knapp, the sage and philosopher who founded Extension Work.